

ON THE

EVILS OF SLAVERY.

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TAKEN, WITH A FEW SMALL ALTERATIONS, FROM HIS WORK
ON SLAVERY.

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THE EVILS OF SLAVERY.

THE subject now to be treated of is painful and repulsive. We must not, however, turn away from the contemplation of human sufferings and guilt. Evil is permitted by the Creator, that we should strive against it, in faith, and hope, and charity. We must never quail before it because of its extent and duration, never feel as if its power were greater than that of goodness. It is meant to call forth deep sympathy with human nature, and unwearied sacrifices for human redemption. One great part of the mission of every man on earth is to contend with evil in some of its forms ; and there are some evils so dependent on opinion, that every man, in judging and reproving them faithfully, does something toward their removal. Let us not, then, shrink from the contemplation of human sufferings. Even sympathy, if we have nothing more to offer, is a tribute acceptable to the Universal Father. On this topic exaggeration should be conscientiously shunned ; and, at the same time, humanity requires that the whole truth should be honestly spoken.

In treating of the evils of slavery, I, of course, speak of its general, not universal effects, of its natural tendencies, not unfailing results. There are the same natural differences among the bond as the free, and there is a great diversity in the circumstances in which they are placed. The house-slave, selected for ability and faithfulness, placed amidst the habits, accommodations, and improvements of civilized life, admitted to a degree of confidence and familiarity, and requiring these privileges with attachment, is almost necessarily more enlightened and respectable than the field-slave, who is confined to monotonous toils, and to the society and influences of beings as degraded as himself. The mechanics in this class are sensibly benefitted by occupations which give a higher action to the mind. Among the bond, as the free, will be found those to whom nature seems partial, and who are carried almost instinctively toward what is good. I speak of the natural, general influences of slavery. Here, as everywhere else, there are exceptions to the rule, and exceptions which multiply with

the moral improvements of the community in which the slave is found. But these do not determine the general character of the institution. It has general tendencies founded in its very nature, and which predominate vastly wherever it exists. These tendencies it is my present purpose to unfold.

1. The first rank among the evils of slavery must be given to its Moral influence. This is throughout debasing. Common language teaches this. We can say nothing more insulting of another, than that he is Slavish. To possess the spirit of a slave is to have sunk to the lowest depths. We can apply to slavery no worse name than its own. Men have always shrunk instinctively from this state, as the most degraded. No punishment, save death, has been more dreaded, and to avoid it death has often been endured.

In expressing the moral influence of slavery the first and most obvious remark is, that it destroys the proper consciousness and spirit of a Man. The slave, regarded and treated as property, bought and sold like a brute, denied the rights of humanity, unprotected against insult, made a tool, and systematically subdued, that he may be a manageable, useful tool, how can he help regarding himself as fallen below his race? How must his spirit be crushed! How can he respect himself? He becomes bowed to Servility. This word, borrowed from his condition, expresses the ruin wrought by slavery within him. The idea, that he was made for his own virtue and happiness, scarcely dawns on his mind. To be an instrument of the physical, material good of another, whose will is his highest law, he is taught to regard as the great purpose of his being. Here lies the evil of slavery. Its whips, imprisonments, and even the horrors of the middle passage from Africa to America, these are not to be named, in comparison with this extinction of the proper consciousness of a human being, with the degradation of a man into a brute.

It may be said, that the slave is used to his yoke; that his sensibilities are blunted; that he receives, without a pang or a thought, the treatment which would sting other men to madness. And to what does this apology amount? It virtually declares, that slavery has done its perfect work, has quenched the spirit of humanity, that the Man is dead within the Slave. Is slavery, therefore, no wrong? It is not, however, true, that this work of debasement is ever so effectually done as to extinguish all feeling. Man is too great a creature to be wholly ruined by man. When he seems dead he only sleeps.

There are occasionally some sullen murmurs in the calm of slavery, showing that life still beats in the soul, that the idea of Rights cannot be wholly effaced from the human being.

It would be too painful, and it is not needed, to detail the processes by which the spirit is broken in slavery. I refer to one only, the selling of slaves. The practice of exposing fellow-creatures for sale, of having markets for men as for cattle, of examining the limbs and muscles of a man and a woman as of a brute, of putting human beings under the hammer of an auctioneer, and delivering them, like any other articles of merchandise, to the highest bidder; all this is such an insult to our common nature, and so infinitely degrading to the poor victim, that it is hard to conceive of its existence, except in a barbarous country.

That slavery should be most unpropitious to the slave as a moral being will be farther apparent, if we consider that his condition is throughout a Wrong, and that consequently it must tend to unsettle all his notions of duty. The violation of his own rights, to which he is inured from birth, must throw confusion over his ideas of all human rights. He cannot comprehend them; or, if he does, how can he respect them, seeing them, as he does, perpetually trampled on in his own person? The injury to the character, from living in an atmosphere of wrong, we can all understand. To live in a state of society, of which injustice is the chief and all-pervading element, is too severe a trial for human nature, especially when no means are used to counteract its influence.

Accordingly, the most common distinctions of morality are faintly apprehended by the slave. Respect for property, that fundamental law of civil society, can hardly be instilled into him. His dishonesty is proverbial. Theft from his master passes with him for no crime. A system of force is generally found to drive to fraud. How necessarily will this be the result of a relation in which force is used to extort from a man his labor, his natural property, without any attempt to win his consent! Can we wonder that the uneducated conscience of the man who is daily wronged, should allow him in reprisals to the extent of his power? Thus the primary social virtue, justice, is undermined in the slave.

That the slave should yield himself to intemperance, licentiousness, and, in general, to sensual excess, we must also expect. Doomed to live for the physical indulgences of others, unused to any pleasures but those of sense, stripped of self-respect, and having nothing to gain in life, how can he be

expected to govern himself? How naturally, I had almost said necessarily, does he become the creature of sensation, of passion, of the present moment! What aid does the future give him in withstanding desire? That better condition, for which other men postpone the cravings of appetite, never opens before him. The sense of character, the power of opinion, another restraint on the free, can do little or nothing to rescue so abject a class from excess and debasement. In truth, power over himself is the last virtue we should expect in the slave, when we think of him as subjected to absolute power, and made to move passively from the impulse of a foreign will. He is trained to cowardice, and cowardice links itself naturally with low vices. Idleness, to his apprehension, is paradise, for he works without hope of reward. Thus slavery robs him of moral force, and prepares him to fall a prey to appetite and passion.

That the slave finds in his condition little nutriment for the social virtues we shall easily understand, if we consider that his chief relations are to an absolute master, and to the companions of his degrading bondage; that is, to a being who wrongs him, and to associates whom he cannot honor, whom he sees debased. His dependence on his owner loosens his ties to all other beings. He has no country to love, no family to call his own, no objects of public utility to espouse, no impulse to generous exertion. The relations, dependences, and responsibilities, by which Providence forms the soul to a deep, disinterested love, are almost struck out of his lot. An arbitrary rule, a foreign, irresistible will, taking him out of his own hands, and placing him beyond the natural influences of society, extinguishes in a great degree the sense of what is due to himself, and to the human family around him.

The effects of slavery on the character are so various that this part of the discussion might be greatly extended; but I will touch only on one topic. Let us turn, for a moment, to the great motive by which the slave is made to labor. Labor, in one form or another, is appointed by God for man's improvement and happiness, and absorbs the chief part of human life, so that the Motive which excites to it has immense influence on character. It determines very much, whether life shall serve or fail of its end. The man, who works from honorable motives, from domestic affections, from desire of a condition which will open to him greater happiness and usefulness, finds in labor an exercise and invigoration of virtue. The day-laborer, who earns, with horny hand and the sweat of his face,

coarse food for a wife and children whom he loves, is raised, by this generous motive, to true dignity ; and, though wanting the refinements of life, is a nobler being than those who think themselves absolved by wealth from serving others. Now the slave's labor brings no dignity, is an exercise of no virtue, but throughout a degradation ; so that one of God's chief provisions for human improvement becomes a curse. The motive from which he acts debases him. It is the Whip. It is corporal punishment. It is physical pain inflicted by a fellow-creature. Undoubtedly labor is mitigated to the slave, as to all men, by habit. But this is not the motive. Take away the whip, and he would be idle. His labor brings no new comforts to wife or child. The motive which spurs him is one by which it is base to be swayed. Stripes are, indeed, resorted to by civil government, when no other consideration will deter from crime ; but he, who is deterred from wrong-doing by the whipping post, is among the most fallen of his race. To work in sight of the whip, under menace of blows, is to be exposed to perpetual insult and degrading influences. Every motion of the limbs, which such a menace urges, is a wound to the soul. How hard must it be for a man, who lives under the lash, to respect himself ! When this motive is substituted for all the nobler ones which God ordains, is it not almost necessarily death to the better and higher sentiments of our nature ? It is the part of a man to despise pain in comparison with disgrace, to meet it fearlessly in well-doing, to perform the work of life from other impulses. It is the part of a brute to be governed by the whip. Even the brute is seen to act from more generous incitements. The horse of a noble breed will not endure the lash. Shall we put man below the horse ?

Let it not be said, that blows are seldom inflicted. Be it so. We are glad to know it. But this is not the point. The complaint now urged is not of the amount of the pain inflicted, but of its influence on the character, when made the great motive to human labor. It is not the endurance, but the dread of the whip, it is the substitution of this for natural and honorable motives to action, which we abhor and condemn. It matters not, whether few or many are whipped. A blow given to a single slave is a stripe on the souls of all who see or hear it. It makes all abject, servile. It is not the wound given to the flesh, of which we now complain. Scar the back, and you have done nothing, compared with the wrong done to the soul. You have either stung that soul with infernal passions, with thirst for revenge ; or, what perhaps is more discouraging,

you have broken and brutalized it. The human spirit has perished under your hands, as far as it can be destroyed by human force.

I know it is sometimes said, in reply to these remarks, that all men, as well as slaves, act from necessity ; that we have masters in hunger and thirst ; that no man loves labor for itself ; that the pains, which are inflicted on us by the laws of nature, the elements, and seasons, are so many lashes driving us to our daily task. Be it so. Still the two cases are essentially different. The necessity laid on us by natural wants is most kindly in its purpose. It is meant to awaken all our faculties, to give full play to body and mind, and thus to give us a new consciousness of the powers derived to us from God. We are, indeed, subjected to a stern nature ; we are placed amidst warring elements, scorching heat, withering cold, storms, blights, sickness, death. And what is the design ? To call forth our powers, to lay on us great duties, to make us nobler beings. We are placed in the midst of a warring nature, not to yield to it, not to be its slaves, but to conquer it, to make it the monument of our skill and strength, to arm ourselves with its elements, its heat, winds, vapors, and mineral treasures, to find, in its painful changes, occasions and incitements to invention, courage, endurance, mutual and endearing dependences, and religious trust. The development of human nature, in all its powers and affections, is the end of that hard necessity which is laid on us by nature. Is this one and the same thing with the whip laid on the slave ? Still more ; it is the design of nature, that, by energy, skill, and self-denial, we should so far anticipate our wants or accumulate supplies, as to be able to diminish the toil of the hands, and to mix with it more intellectual and liberal occupations. Nature does not lay on us an unchangeable task, but one which we may all lighten by honest, self-denying industry. Thus she invites us to throw off her yoke, and to make her our servant. Is this the invitation which the master gives his slave ? Is it his aim to awaken the powers of those on whom he lays his burdens, and to give them increasing mastery over himself ? Is it not his aim to curb their wills, break their spirits, and shut them up forever in the same narrow and degrading work ? Oh, let not nature be profaned, let not her parental rule be blasphemed, by comparing with her the slave-holder !

2. Having considered the moral influence of slavery, I proceed to consider its Intellectual influence, another great topic.

God gave us intellectual power that it should be cultivated ; and a system which degrades it, and can only be upheld by its depression, opposes one of his most benevolent designs. Reason is one of God's best gifts to man, and the capacity of acquiring truth is among his most valued benefactions to our race. To call forth the intellect is a principal purpose of the circumstances in which we are placed, of the child's connection with the parent, and of the necessity laid on him in maturer life to provide for himself and others. The education of the intellect is not confined to youth ; but the various experience of later years does vastly more than books and colleges to ripen and invigorate the faculties.

Now the whole lot of the slave is fitted to keep his mind in childhood and bondage. Though living in a land of light, few beams find their way to his benighted understanding. No parent feels the duty of instructing him. No teacher is provided for him, but the Driver, who breaks him, almost in childhood, to the servile tasks which are to fill up his life. No book is opened to his youthful curiosity. As he advances in years, no new excitements supply the place of teachers. He is not cast on himself, made to depend on his own energies. No stirring prizes in life awaken his dormant faculties. Fed and clothed by others, like a child, directed in every step, doomed for life to a monotonous round of labor, he lives and dies without a spring to his powers, often brutally unconscious of his spiritual nature. Nor is this all. When benevolence would approach him with instruction, it is repelled. He is not allowed to be taught. The Light is jealously barred out. The voice, which would speak to him as a man, is put to silence. He must not even be enabled to read the words of God, as contained in the Holy Scriptures. His immortal spirit is systematically crushed.

It is said, I know, that the ignorance of the slave is necessary to the security of the master, and the quiet of the state ; and this I apprehend may be said truly. Slavery and knowledge cannot live together. To enlighten the slave is to break his chain. To make him harmless, he must be kept blind. He cannot be left to read, in an enlightened age, without endangering his master ; for what can he read which will not give, at least, some hint of his wrongs ? Should his eye chance to fall on the "Declaration of Independence," how would the truth glare on him, that "All men are born free and equal !" All knowledge furnishes arguments against slavery. From every subject light would break forth to reveal

his inalienable and outraged rights. The very exercise of his intellect would give him the consciousness of being made for something more than a slave. If we agree to the necessity laid on his master to keep him in darkness, what stronger argument against slavery can be conceived? It compels the master to degrade systematically the mind of the slave; to war against human intelligence; to resist that improvement which is the end of the Creator. "Woe to him that taketh away the key of knowledge!" To kill the body is a great crime. The spirit we cannot kill, but we can bury it in death-like lethargy; and is this a light crime in the sight of its Maker?

Let it not be said, that almost everywhere the laboring classes are doomed to ignorance, deprived of the means of instruction. The intellectual advantages of the laboring free-man, who is intrusted with the care of himself, raise him far above the slave; and, accordingly, superior minds are constantly seen to issue from the less educated classes. Besides, in free communities, philanthropy is not forbidden to labor for the improvement of the ignorant. The obligation of the prosperous and instructed to elevate their less favored brethren is taught, and not taught in vain. Benevolence is making perpetual encroachments on the domain of ignorance and crime. In communities, on the other hand, cursed with slavery, half the population, sometimes more, are given up, INTENTIONALLY AND SYSTEMATICALLY, to hopeless ignorance. To raise this mass to intelligence and self-government is a crime. The sentence of perpetual degradation is passed on a large portion of the human race. In this view, how great the ill-desert of slavery!

3. I proceed, now, to the Domestic influences of slavery; and here we must look for a dark picture. Slavery virtually dissolves the domestic relations. It ruptures the most sacred ties on earth. It violates home. It lacerates the best affections. The domestic relations precede, and, in our present existence, are worth more than all our other social ties. They give the first throb to the heart, and unseal the deep fountains of its love. Home is the chief school of human virtue. Its responsibilities, joys, sorrows, smiles, tears, hopes, and solitudes, form the chief interests of human life. Go where a man may, home is the centre to which his heart turns. The thought of his home nerves his arm and lightens his toil. For that his heart yearns, when he is far off. There he garners

up his best treasures. God has ordained for all men alike the highest earthly happiness, in providing for all the sanctuary of home. But the slave's home does not merit the name. To him it is no sanctuary. It is open to violation, insult, outrage. His children belong to another, are provided for by another, are disposed of by another. The most precious burden with which the heart can be charged, the happiness of his child, he must not bear. He lives not for his family, but for a stranger. He cannot improve their lot. His wife and daughter he cannot shield from insult. They may be torn from him at another's pleasure, sold as beasts of burden, sent he knows not whither, sent where he cannot reach them, or even interchange inquiries and messages of love. To the slave, marriage has no sanctity. It may be dissolved in a moment at another's will. His wife, son, and daughter may be lashed before his eyes, and not a finger must be lifted in their defense. He sees the scar of the lash on his wife and child. Thus the slave's home is desecrated. Thus the tenderest relations, intended by God equally for all, and intended to be the chief springs of happiness and virtue, are sported with wantonly and cruelly. What outrage so great as to enter a man's house, and tear from his side the beings whom God has bound to him by the holiest ties? Every man can make the case his own. Every mother can bring it home to her own heart.

And let it not be said, that the slave has not the sensibilities of other men. Nature is too strong even for slavery to conquer. Even the brute has the yearnings of parental love. But suppose that the conjugal and parental ties of the slave may be severed without a pang. What a curse must be slavery, if it can so blight the heart with more than brutal insensibility, if it can sink the human mother below the polar she-bear, which "howls and dies for her sundered cub!" But it does not and cannot turn the slave to stone. It leaves, at least, feeling enough to make these domestic wrongs occasions of frequent and deep suffering. Still it must do much to quench the natural affections. Can the wife, who has been brought up under influences most unfriendly to female purity and honor, who is exposed to the whip, who may be torn away at her master's will, and whose support and protection are not committed to a husband's faithfulness, can such a wife, if the name may be given her, be loved and honored as a woman should be? Or can the love, which should bind together man and his offspring, be expected under an institution which subverts, in a great degree, filial dependence and parental authority and care? Slavery

withers the affections and happiness of home at their very root, by tainting female purity. Woman, brought up in degradation, placed under another's power and at another's disposal, and never taught to look forward to the happiness of an inviolate, honorable marriage, can hardly possess the feelings and virtues of her sex. A blight falls on her in her early years. Those who have daughters can comprehend her lot. In truth, licentiousness among bond and free is the natural issue of all-polluting slavery. Domestic happiness perishes under its touch, both among bond and free.

How wonderful is it, that, in civilized countries, men can be so steeled by habit as to invade without remorse the peace, purity, and sacred relations of domestic life, as to put asunder those whom God has joined together, as to break up households by processes more painful than death! And this is done for pecuniary profit! What! Can men, having human feeling, grow rich by the desolation of families? We hear of some of the Southern States enriching themselves by breeding slaves for sale. Of all the licensed occupations of society this is the most detestable. What! Grow men like cattle! Rear human families, like herds of swine, and then scatter them to the four winds for gain! Among the imprecations uttered by man on man, is there one more fearful more ominous, than the sighing of the mother bereft of her child by unfeeling cupidity? If blood cry to God, surely that sigh will be heard in heaven.

Let it not be said, that members of families are often separated in all conditions of life. Yes, but separated under the influence of love. The husband leaves wife and children, that he may provide for their support, and carries them with him in his heart and hopes. The sailor, in his lonely night-watch, looks homeward, and well known voices come to him amidst the roar of the waves. The parent sends away his children, but sends them to prosper, and to press them again to his heart with a joy enhanced by separation. Are such the separations which slavery makes? And can he, who has scattered other families, ask God to bless his own?

4. I proceed to another important view of the evils of slavery. Slavery produces and gives license to Cruelty. By this it is not meant, that cruelty is the universal, habitual, unfailing result. Thanks to God, Christianity has not entered the world in vain. Where it has not cast down, it has mitigated bad institutions. Slavery in this country differs widely

from that of ancient times, and from that which the Spaniards imposed on the aborigines of South America. There is here an increasing disposition to multiply the comforts of the slaves, and in this let us rejoice. At the same time, we must remember, that, under the light of the present day, and in a country where Christianity and the rights of men are understood, a diminished severity may contain more guilt than the ferocity of darker ages. Cruelty in its lighter forms is now a greater crime than the atrocious usages of antiquity at which we shudder. "The times of that ignorance God winked at, but *now* he calleth men everywhere to repent." It should also be considered, that the slightest cruelty to the slave is an aggravated wrong, because he is unjustly held in bondage, unjustly held as property. We condemn the man who enforces harshly a righteous claim. What, then, ought we to think of lashing and scarring fellow-creatures, for the purpose of upholding an unrighteous, usurped power, of extorting labor which is not our due ?

I have said that cruelty is not the habit of the Slave States of this country. Still, that it is frequent we cannot doubt. Reports, which harrow up our souls, come to us from that quarter ; and we know that they must be essentially correct, because it is impossible that a large part, perhaps the majority, of the population of the country can be broken to passive, unlimited submission, without examples of terrible severity.

Let it not be said, as is sometimes done, that cruel deeds are perpetrated everywhere else, as well as in slave-countries. Be it so ; but in all civilized nations, unscourged by slavery, a principal object of legislation is to protect every man from cruelty, and to bring every man to punishment who wantonly tortures or wounds another ; whilst slavery plucks off restraint from the ferocious, or leaves them to satiate their rage with impunity. Let it not be said, that these barbarities are regarded nowhere with more horror than at the South. Be it so. They are abhorred, but allowed. The power of individuals to lacerate their fellow-creatures is given to them by the community. The community abhors the abuse, but confers the power which will certainly be abused, and thus strips itself of all defense before the bar of Almighty Justice. It must answer for the crimes which are shielded by its laws. Let it not be said, that these cruelties are checked by the private interest of the slave-holder. Does regard to private interest save from brutal treatment the draught-horse in our streets ?

And may not a vast amount of suffering be inflicted, which will not put in peril the life or strength of the slave ?

To substantiate the charge of cruelty, I shall not, as I have said, have recourse to current reports, however well established. I am willing to dismiss them all as false. I stand on other ground. Reports may lie, but our daily experience of human nature cannot lie. I summon no witnesses, or rather I appeal to a witness everywhere present, a witness in every heart. Who, that has watched his own heart, or observed others, does not feel that man is not fit to be trusted with absolute, irresponsible power over man ? It must be abused. The selfish passions and pride of our nature will as surely abuse it, as the storm will ravage, or the ocean swell and roar under the whirlwind. A being, so ignorant, so headstrong, so passionate, as man, ought not to be trusted with this terrible dominion. He ought not to desire it. He ought to dread it. He ought to cast it from him, as most perilous to himself and others.

Absolute power was not meant for man. There is, indeed, an exception to this rule. There is one case, in which God puts a human being, wholly defenseless, into another's hands. I refer to the child, who is wholly subjected to the parent's will. But observe how carefully, I might almost say anxiously, God has provided against the abuse of this power. He has raised up for the child, in the heart of the parent, a guardian, whom the mightiest on earth cannot resist. He has fitted the parent for this trust, by teaching him to love his offspring better than himself. No eloquence on earth is so subduing as the moaning of the infant when in pain. No reward is sweeter than that infant's smile. We say, God has put the infant into the parent's hands. Might we not more truly say, that he has put the parent into the child's power ? That little being sends forth his father to toil, and makes the mother watch over him by day, and fix on him her sleepless eyes by night. No tyrant lays such a yoke. Thus God has fenced and secured from abuse the power of the parent ; and yet even the parent has been known, in a moment of passion, to be cruel to his child. Is man, then, to be trusted with absolute power over a fellow-creature, who, instead of being commended by nature to his tenderest love, belongs to a despised race, is regarded as property, is made the passive instrument of his gratification and gain ? I ask no documents to prove the abuses of this power, nor do I care what is said to disprove them. Millions may rise up and tell me that the slave suffers

little from cruelty. I know too much of human nature, human history, human passion, to believe them. I acquit slaveholders of all peculiar depravity. I judge them by myself. I say, that absolute power always corrupts human nature more or less. I say, that extraordinary, almost miraculous self-control is necessary to secure the slave-holder from provocation and passion; and is self-control the virtue which, above all others, grows up amidst the possession of irresponsible dominion? Even when the slave-holder honestly acquits himself of cruelty, he may be criminal. His own consciousness is to be distrusted. Having begun with wronging the slave, with wresting from him sacred rights, he may be expected to multiply wrongs, without thought. The degraded state of the slave may induce in the master a mode of treatment essentially inhuman and insulting, but which he never dreams to be cruel. The influence of slavery, in indurating the moral feeling and blinding men to wrong, is one of its worst evils.

But suppose the master to be ever so humane. Still, he is not always watching over his slaves. He has his pleasures to attend to. He is often absent. His terrible power must be delegated. And to whom is it delegated? To men prepared to govern others, by having learned to govern themselves? To men having a deep interest in the slaves? To wise men, instructed in human nature? To Christians, trained to purity and love? Who does not know, that the office of Overseer is among the last which an enlightened, philanthropic, self-respecting man would choose? Who does not know, how often the overseer pollutes the plantation by his licentiousness, as well as scourges it by his severity? In the hands of such a man the lash is placed. To such a man is committed the most fearful trust on earth! For his cruelties the master must answer, as truly as if they were his own. Nor is this all. The master does more than delegate his power to the overseer. How often does he part with it wholly to the slave-dealer! And has he weighed the responsibility of such a transfer? Does he not know, that, in selling his slaves into merciless hands, he is merciless himself, and must give an account to God for every barbarity of which they become the victims? The notorious cruelty of the slave-dealers can be no false report, for it belongs to their vocation. These are the men who throng and defile our Seat of Government, whose slave-markets and slave-dungeons turn to mockery the language of freedom in the halls of Congress, and who make us justly the by-word and the scorn of the nations. Is there no

cruelty in putting slaves under the bloody lash of the slave-dealer, to be driven like herds of cattle to distant regions, and there to pass into the hands of strangers, without a pledge of their finding justice or mercy? What heart, not seared by custom, would not recoil from such barbarity?

It has been seen that I do not ground my argument at all on cases of excessive cruelty. I should attach less importance to these than do most persons, even were they more frequent. They form a very, very small amount of suffering, compared with what is inflicted by abuses of power too minute for notice. Blows, insults, privations, which make no noise, and leave no scar, are incomparably more destructive of happiness than a few brutal violences which move general indignation. A weak, despised being, having no means of defense or redress, living in a community armed against his rights, regarded as property, and as bound to entire, unresisting compliance with another's will, if not subjected to inflictions of ferocious cruelty, is yet exposed to less striking and shocking forms of cruelty, the amount of which must be a fearful mass of suffering.

But could it be proved that there are no cruelties in slave-countries, we ought not then to be more reconciled to slavery than we now are. For what would this show? That cruelty is not needed. And why not needed? Because the slave is entirely subdued to his lot. No man will be wholly unresisting in bondage, but he who is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of a slave. If the colored race never need punishment, it is because the feelings of men are dead within them, because they have no consciousness of rights, because they are cowards, without respect for themselves, and without confidence in the sharers of their degraded lot. The quiet of slavery is like that which the Roman legions left in ancient Britain, the stillness of death. Why were the Romans accustomed to work their slaves in chains by day, and confine them in dungeons by night? Not because they loved cruelty for its own sake; but because their slaves were stung with a consciousness of degradation, because they brought from the forests of Dacia some rude ideas of human dignity, or from civilized countries some experience of social improvements, which naturally issued in violence and exasperation. They needed cruelty, for their own wills were not broken to another's, and the spirit of freemen was not wholly gone. The slave *must* meet cruel treatment either inwardly or outwardly. Either the soul or the body must receive the blow. Either the flesh must be

tortured or the spirit be struck down. Dreadful alternative to which slavery is reduced !

5. I proceed to another view of the evils of slavery. I refer to its influence on the Master. This topic cannot, perhaps, be so handled as to avoid giving offense : but without it an imperfect view of the subject would be given. I will pass over many views. I will say nothing of the tendency of slavery to unsettle the ideas of Right in the slave-holder, to impair his conviction of Justice and Benevolence ; or of its tendency to associate with labor ideas of degradation, and to recommend idleness as an honorable exemption. I will confine myself to two considerations.

The first is, that slavery, above all other influences, nourishes the passion for power and its kindred vices. There is no passion which needs a stronger curb. Men's worst crimes have sprung from the desire of being masters, of bending others to their yoke. And the natural tendency of bringing others into subjection to our absolute will is to quicken into fearful activity the imperious, haughty, proud, self-seeking propensities of our nature. Man cannot, without imminent peril to his virtue, own a fellow creature, or use the word of absolute command to his brethren. God never delegated this power. It is a usurpation of the Divine dominion, and its natural influence is to produce a spirit of superiority to Divine as well as to human laws.

Undoubtedly this tendency is in a measure counteracted by the spirit of the age and the genius of Christianity, and in conscientious individuals it may be wholly overcome ; but we see its fruits in the corruptions of moral sentiment which prevail among slave-holders. A quick resentment of whatever is thought to encroach on personal dignity, a trembling jealousy of reputation, vehemence of the vindictive passions, and contempt of all laws, human and divine, in retaliating injury, — these take rank among the virtues of men whose self-estimation has been fed by the possessions of absolute power.

Of consequence, the direct tendency of slavery is to annihilate the control of Christianity. Humility is, by eminence, the spirit of Christianity. Among the vices keenly rebuked by our Lord, was the passion for ruling over others. A deference toward all human beings as our brethren, a benevolence which disposes us to serve rather than to reign, to concede our own rather than to encroach on other's rights, to forgive, not avenge wrongs, to govern our own spirits instead of breaking

the spirit of an inferior or foe, — this is Christianity ; a religion so pure as rarely to be understood and obeyed anywhere as it should be, but which meets singular hostility in the habits of mind generated by slavery.

The slave-holder, indeed, values himself on his loftiness of spirit. He has a consciousness of dignity which imposes on himself and others. But truth cannot stoop to this lofty mien. Truth, moral, Christian truth, condemns it, and condemns those who bow to it. Self-respect, founded on a consciousness of our moral nature and immortal destiny, is, indeed, a noble principle ; but this sentiment includes, as a part of itself, respect for all who partake our nature. A consciousness of dignity, founded on the subjection of others to our absolute will, is inhuman and unjust. It is time that the teachings of Christ were understood. In proportion as a man acquires a lofty bearing from the habit of command over wronged and depressed fellow-creatures, so far he casts away true honor, so far he has fallen in the sight of God and Virtue.

I approach a more delicate subject, and one on which I shall not enlarge. To own the persons of others, to hold females in slavery, is necessarily fatal to the purity of a people. That unprotected females, stripped by their degraded condition of woman's self-respect, should be used to minister to other passions in men than the love of gain is next to inevitable. Accordingly, in such a community the reins are given to youthful licentiousness. Youth, everywhere in peril, is in these circumstances urged to vice with a terrible power. And the evil cannot stop at youth. Early licentiousness is fruitful of crime in mature life. How far the obligation to conjugal fidelity, the sacredness of domestic ties, will be revered amidst such habits, such temptations, such facilities to vice, as are involved in slavery, needs no exposition. So sure and terrible is retribution even in this life ! Domestic happiness is not blighted in the slave's hut alone. The master's infidelity sheds a blight over his own domestic affections and joys. Home, without purity and constancy, is spoiled of its holiest charm and most blessed influences. I need not say, after the preceding explanations, that this corruption is far from being universal. Still, a slave-country reeks with licentiousness. It is tainted with a deadlier pestilence than the plague.

But the worst is not told. As a consequence of criminal connections, many a master has children born into slavery. Of these most, I presume, receive protection, perhaps indulgence, during the life of the fathers ; but at their death, not a

few are left to the chances of a cruel bondage. These cases must have increased, since the difficulties of emancipation have been multiplied. Still more ; it is to be feared that there are cases, in which the master puts his own children under the whip of the overseer, or else sells them to undergo the miseries of bondage among strangers. I should rejoice to learn that my impressions on this point are false. If they be true, then our own country, calling itself enlightened and Christian, is defiled with one of the greatest enormities on earth. We send missionaries to heathen lands. Among the pollutions of heathenism I know nothing worse than this. The heathen, who feasts on his country's foe, may hold up his head by the side of a Christian who sells his child for gain, sells him to be a slave. God forbid that I should charge this crime on a people ! But however rarely it may occur, it is a fruit of slavery, an exercise of power belonging to slavery, and no laws restrain or punish it. Such are the evils which spring naturally from the licentiousness generated by slavery.

6. I cannot leave the subject of the evils of slavery without saying a word of its Political influence. Under this head I shall not engage in discussions which belong to the economist. I shall not repeat, what has been often proved, that slave-labor is less productive than free ; nor shall I show, how the ability of a community, to unfold its resources in peace and to defend itself in war, must be impaired, by degrading the laboring population to a state, which takes from them motives to toil, and renders them objects of suspicion or dread. I wish only to speak of the influence of slavery on Free Institutions. This influence, we are gravely told, is favorable, and therefore I am bound to give it a brief notice. Political liberty is said to find strength and security in domestic servitude. Strange mode, indeed, of insuring freedom to ourselves, to violate it in the persons of others ! Among the new lights of the age, the most wonderful discovery is, that to spoil others of their rights is the way to assert the sacredness of our own.

And how is slavery proved to support free institutions ? Slave-holding, we are told, infuses an indomitable spirit, and this is a pledge against tyranny. But do we not know that Asia and Africa, slave-holding countries from the earliest date of history, have been paralyzed for ages and robbed of all manly force by despotism ? In the feudal ages, the baron, surrounded by his serfs, had undoubtedly enough of a fiery spirit to keep him free, if this were the true defense of free-

dom ; but gradually his pride was curbed, his power broken ; a greater tyrant swallowed him up ; and the descendants of nobles, who would have died sooner than brooked a master, were turned into courtiers, as pliant as their fathers had been ferocious.

But "the free States of antiquity," we are told, "had slaves." So had the monarchies of the same periods. With which of these institutions was slavery most congenial ? To which did it most probably give support ? Besides, it is only by courtesy that we call the ancient republics free. Rome in her best days was an aristocracy ; nor were private rights, which it is the chief office of liberty to protect, rendered a whit more secure by the gradual triumphs of the people over the patrician power. Slavery was at all periods the curse of Rome. The great mass of her free population, throwing almost every laborious occupation on the slaves, became an idle, licentious rabble ; and this unprincipled populace, together with the slaves, furnished ready instruments for every private and public crime. When Clodius prowled the streets of Rome for the murder of Cicero and the best citizens, his train was composed in part of slaves, fit bloodhounds for his nefarious work. The republic in its proudest days was desolated and convulsed by servile war. Imperial Rome was overwhelmed by savage hordes, for this, among other reasons, that her whole peasantry consisted either of slaves, or of nominal free-men degraded to a servile condition, so that her legions could be recruited only from tribes of barbarians whom she had formerly subdued.

But the great argument in favor of the political benefits of slavery remains to be stated. In plain language it amounts to this, that slavery excludes the laboring or poorer classes from the elective franchise, from political power ; and it is the turbulence of these classes which is supposed to constitute the chief peril of liberty. But in slave-holding communities are there no distinctions of condition among the free ? Are none comparatively poor ? Is there no democracy ? Was not Athens, crowded as she was with slaves, the most turbulent of democracies ? And further, do not the idleness and impatience of restraint, into which the free of a slave-holding community naturally fall, generate an intenser party-spirit, fiercer political passions, and more desperate instruments of ambition, than can be found among the laboring classes in a community where slavery is unknown ? In which of the two great divisions of our own country are political strifes most likely to be settled

by the sword? In the Slave-holding States, or the Free? The laboring classes, when brought up under free institutions and equal laws, are not necessarily or peculiarly disposed to abuse the elective franchise. Their daily toil, often exhausting, secures them from habitual political excitement. The most powerful spirits among them are continually rising to a prosperity, which gives them an interest in public order. There is also a general diffusion of property, the result of unfettered industry, which forms a general motive to the support of the laws. It should be added, that the domestic virtues and religious sentiments, which in a Christian country spread through all ranks, and spread more widely among the industrious than the idle, are powerful checks on the passions, strong barriers against civil convulsion. Idleness, rather than toil, makes the turbulent partisan. Whoever knows the state of society in the Free States can testify, that the love of liberty, pride in our free institutions, and jealousy of rights, are nowhere more active than in those very classes which in a slave-holding country are reduced to servitude. Undoubtedly the jealousies, passions, and prejudices of the laboring portion of the community may work evil, and even ruin to the state; and so may the luxury, the political venality, the gambling spirit of trade, and the cupidity, to be found in other ranks or conditions. If freedom must be denied wherever it will be endangered, then every class in society must be reduced to slavery.

Free institutions rest on two great political virtues, the love of liberty and the love of order. The slave-holder (I mean the slave-holder by choice) is of necessity more or less wanting in both. How plain is it, that no man can love liberty with a true love, who has the heart to wrest it from others. Attachment to freedom does not consist in spurning indignantly a yoke prepared for our own necks; for this is done even by the savage and the beast of prey. It is a moral sentiment, an impartial desire and choice that others as well as ourselves may be protected from every wrong, may be exempted from every unjust restraint. Slave-holding, when perpetuated selfishly and from choice, is at open war with this generous principle. It is a plain, habitual contempt of human rights, and of course impairs that sense of their sanctity which is their best protection. It offers, every day and hour, a precedent of usurpation to the ambitious. It creates a caste with despotic powers; and under such guardians is liberty peculiarly secure? It creates a burning zeal for the rights of a

privileged class, but not for the Rights of Men. These the voluntary slave-holder casts down by force; and, in the changes of human affairs, the time may not be distant, when he will learn, that force, accustomed to triumph over right, is prone to leap every bound, and to make the proud as well as abject stoop to its sway.

Slavery is also hostile to the love of order, which, in union with the love of liberty, is the great support of free institutions. Slave-holding in a republic tends directly to lawlessness. It gives the habit of command, not of obedience. The absolute master is not likely to distinguish himself by subjection to the civil power. The substitution of passion and self-will for law is nowhere so common as in the slave-holding States. In these it is thought honorable to rely on one's own arm, rather than on the magistrate, for the defense of many rights. In some, perhaps many, districts, the chief peace-officer seems to be the weapon worn as part of the common dress: and the multitude seem to be more awed by one another's passions, than by the authority of the State. Such communities have no pledge of stable liberty. Reverence for the laws, as manifestations of the public will, is the very spirit of free institutions. Does this spirit find its best nutriment in the habits and feelings generated by slavery?

Slavery is a strange element to mix up with free institutions. It cannot but endanger them. It is a pattern for every kind of wrong. The slave brings insecurity on the free. Whoever holds one human being in bondage invites others to plant the foot on his own neck. Thanks to God, not one human being can be wronged with impunity. The liberties of a people ought to tremble, until every man is free. Tremble they will. Their true foundation is sapped by the legalized degradation of a single innocent man to slavery. That foundation is impartial justice, is respect for human nature, is respect for the rights of every human being.

I have endeavored, in these remarks to show the hostility between slavery and free institutions. If, however, I err, if these institutions cannot stand without slavery for their foundation, then I say, Let them fall. Then they ought to be buried in perpetual ruins. Then the name of republicanism ought to become a by-word and reproach among the nations. Then monarchy, limited as it is in England, is incomparably better and happier than our more popular forms. Then despotism, as it exists in Prussia, where equal laws are in the main administered with impartiality, ought to be preferred.

A republican government, bought by the sacrifice of half or more than half of a people, by stripping them of their most sacred rights, by degrading them to a brutal condition, would cost too much. A freedom so tainted with wrong ought to be our abhorrence. They, who tell us that slavery is a necessary condition of a republic, do not justify the former, but pronounce a sentence of reprobation on the latter. If they speak truth, we are bound as a people to seek more just and generous institutions, under which the rights of all will be secure.

I have now placed before the reader the chief evils of slavery. We are told, however, that these are not without mitigation, that slavery has advantages which do much to counterbalance its wrongs and pains. Not a few are partially reconciled to the institution by the language of confidence in which its benefits are sometimes announced. I shall therefore close this chapter with a very brief consideration of what are thought to be the advantages of slavery.

It is often said, that the slave does less work than the free laborer ; he bears a lighter burden than liberty would lay on him. Perhaps this is generally true ; yet, when circumstances promise profit to the master from the imposition of excessive labor, the slave is not spared. In the West Indies, the terrible waste of life among the over-worked cultivators required large supplies from Africa to keep up the failing population. In this country it is probably true that the slave works less than the free laborer ; but it does not therefore follow that his work is lighter. For what is it that lightens toil ? It is Hope ; it is Love ; it is Strong Motive. That labor is light which we do from the heart, to which a great good quickens us, which is to better our lot. That labor is light which is to comfort, adorn, and cheer our homes, to give instruction to our children, to solace the declining years of a parent, to give to our grateful and generous sentiments the means of exertion. Great effort from great motives is the best definition of a happy life. The easiest labor is a burden to him who has no motive for performing it. How wearisome is the task imposed by another, and wrongfully imposed ! The slave cannot easily be made to do a freeman's work ; and why ? Because he wants a freeman's spirit, because the spring of labor is impaired within him, because he works as a machine, not a free agent. The compulsion, under which he toils for another, takes from labor its sweetness, makes the daily round of life arid and dull, makes escape from toil the chief interest of life.

We are further told, that the slave is freed from all care, that he is sure of future support, that when old he is not dismissed to the poor-house, but fed and sheltered in his own hut. This is true; but it is also true that nothing can be gained by violating the great laws and essential rights of our nature. The slave, we are told, has no care, his future is provided for. Yet God created him to provide for the future, to take care of his own happiness; and he cannot be freed from this care without injury to his moral and intellectual life. Why has God given foresight and power over the future, but to be used? Is it a blessing to a rational creature to be placed in a condition which chains his faculties to the present moment, which leaves nothing before him to rouse the intellect or touch the heart? Be it also remembered, that the same provision, which relieves the slave from anxiety, cuts him off from hope. The future is not, indeed, haunted by spectres of poverty, nor is it brightened by images of joy. It stretches before him sterile, monotonous, expanding into no refreshing verdure, and sending no cheering whisper of a better lot.

It is true that the free laborer may become a pauper; and so may the free rich man, of the North and the South. Still, our capitalists never dream of flying to slavery as a security against the almshouse. Freedom undoubtedly has its perils. It offers nothing to the slothful and dissolute. Among a people left to seek their own good in their own way, some of all classes fail from vice, some from incapacity, some from misfortune. All classes will furnish members to the body of the poor. But in this country the number is small, and ought constantly to decrease. The evil, however lamentable, is not so remediless and spreading as to furnish a motive for reducing half the population to chains. Benevolence does much to mitigate it. The best minds are inquiring how it may be prevented, diminished, removed. It is giving excitement to a philanthropy which creates out of misfortune new bonds of union between man and man.

Our slave-holding brethren, who tell us that the condition of the slave is better than that of the free laborer at the North, talk ignorantly and rashly. They do not, cannot know, what to us is matter of daily observation, that from the families of our farmers and mechanics have sprung our most distinguished men, men who have done most for science, arts, letters, religion, and freedom; and that the noblest spirits among us would have been lost to their country and mankind, had the laboring class here been doomed to slavery. They do not

know, what we rejoice to tell them, that this class partakes largely of the impulse given to the whole community ; that the means of intellectual improvement are multiplying to the laborious as fast as to the opulent ; that our most distinguished citizens meet them as brethren, and communicate to them in public discourses their own most important acquisitions. Undoubtedly, the Christian, republican spirit is not working, even here, as it should. The more improved and prosperous classes have not yet learned that it is their great mission to elevate, morally and intellectually, the less advanced classes of the community ; but the great truth is more and more recognised, and accordingly a new era may be said to be opening on society.

It is said, however, that the slave, if not to be compared to the free laborer at the North, is in a happier condition than the Irish peasantry. Let this be granted. Let the security of the peasant's domestic relations, let his church, and his schoolhouse, and his faint hope of a better lot pass for nothing. Because Ireland is suffering from the misgovernment and oppression of ages, does it follow that a less grinding oppression is a good ? Besides, are not the wrongs of Ireland acknowledged ? Is not British legislation laboring to restore her prosperity ? Is it not true, that, whilst the slave's lot admits no important change, the most enlightened minds are at work to confer on the Irish peasant the blessings of education, of equal laws, of new springs to exertion, of new sources of wealth ? Other men, however fallen, may be lifted up. An immovable weight presses on the slave.

But still we are told, the slave is gay. He is not as wretched as our theories teach. After his toil, he sings, he dances, he gives no signs of an exhausted frame or gloomy spirit. The slave happy ! Why, then, contend for rights ? Why follow with beating hearts the struggles of the patriot for freedom ? Why canonize the martyr to freedom ? The slave happy ! Then happiness is to be found in giving up the distinctive attributes of a man ; in darkening intellect and conscience ; in quenching generous sentiments ; in servility of spirit ; in living under a whip ; in having neither property nor rights ; in holding wife and child at another's pleasure ; in toiling without hope ; in living without an end ! The slave, indeed, has his pleasures. His animal nature survives the injury to his rational and moral powers ; and every animal has its enjoyments. The kindness of Providence allows no human being to be wholly divorced from good. The lamb

frolics ; the dog leaps for joy ; the bird fills the air with cheerful harmony ; and the slave spends his holiday in laughter and the dance. Thanks to Him who never leaves himself without witness ; who cheers even the desert with spots of verdure ; and opens a fountain of joy in the most withered heart ! It is not possible, however, to contemplate the occasional gayety of the slave without some mixture of painful thought. He is gay, because he has not learned to think ; because he is too fallen to feel his wrongs ; because he wants just self-respect. We are grieved by the gayety of the insane. There is a sadness in the gayety of him whose lightness of heart would be turned to bitterness and indignation, were one ray of light to awaken in him the spirit of a man.

That there are those among the free, who are more wretched than slaves, is undoubtedly true ; just as there is incomparably greater misery among men than among brutes. The brute never knows the agony of a human spirit torn by remorse or wounded in its love. But would we cease to be human, because our capacity for suffering increases with the elevation of our nature ? All beings may be perverted, and the greatest perverted most. Were we to visit a slave-country, undoubtedly the most miserable human beings would be found among the free ; for among them the passions have wider sweep, and the power they possess may be used to their own ruin. Liberty is not a necessity of happiness. It is only a means of good. It is a trust which may be abused. Are all such trusts to be cast away ? Are they not the greatest gifts of Heaven ?

But the slave, we are told, often manifests affection to his master, grieves at his departure, and welcomes his return. I will not endeavor to explain this, by saying that the master's absence places the slave under the overseer. Nor will I object, that the slave's propensity to steal from his master, his need of the whip to urge him to toil, and the dread of insurrection which he inspires, are signs of any thing but love. There is, undoubtedly, much more affection in this relation than could be expected. Of all races of men, the African is the mildest and most susceptible of attachment. He loves, where the European would hate. He watches the life of a master, whom the North-American Indian, in like circumstances would stab to the heart. The African is affectionate. Is this a reason for holding him in chains ? We cannot, however, think of this most interesting feature of slavery with

unmixed pleasure. It is the curse of slavery, that it can touch nothing which it does not debase. Even love, that sentiment given us by God to be the germ of a divine virtue, becomes in the slave a weakness, almost a degradation. His affections lose much of their beauty and dignity. He ought, indeed, feel benevolence toward his master; but to attach himself to a man who keeps him in the dust and denies him the rights of a man; to be grateful and devoted to one who extorts his toil and debases him into a chattel; this has a taint of servility, which makes us grieve whilst we admire. However, we would not diminish the attachment of the slave. He is the happier for his generosity. Let him love his master, and let the master win love by kindness. We only say, let not this manifestation of a generous nature in the slave be turned against him. Let it not be made an answer to an exposition of his wrongs. Let it not be used as a weapon for his perpetual degradation.

But the slave, we are told, is taught Religion. This is the most cheering sound which comes to us from the land of bondage. We are rejoiced to learn that any portion of the slaves are instructed in that truth which gives inward freedom. They hear at least one voice of deep, genuine love, the voice of Christ; and read in his cross what all other things hide from them, the unutterable worth of their spiritual nature. This portion, however, is small. The greater part are still buried in heathen ignorance. Besides, religion, though a great good, can hardly exert its full power on the slave. Will it not be taught to make him obedient to his master, rather than to raise him to the dignity of a man? Is slavery, which tends so proverbially to debase the mind, the preparation for spiritual truth? Can the slave comprehend the principle of Love, the essential principle of Christianity, when he hears it from the lips of those whose relations to him express injustice and selfishness? But suppose him to receive Christianity in its purity, and to feel all its power. Is this to reconcile us to slavery? Is a being, who can understand the sublimest truth which has ever entered the human mind, who can love and adore God, who can conform himself to the celestial virtue of the Saviour, for whom that Saviour died, to whom heaven is opened, whose repentance now gives joy in heaven, — is such a being to be held as property, driven by force as the brute, and denied the rights of man by a fellow-creature, by a professed disciple of the just and merciful Saviour? Has he a religious nature, and dares any one hold him as a slave?

I have now completed my views of the evils of slavery, and have shown how little they are mitigated by what are thought its advantages. In this whole discussion I have cautiously avoided quoting particular examples of its baneful influences. I have not brought together accounts of horrible cruelty which come to us from the South. I have confined myself to the natural tendencies of slavery, to evils bound up in its very nature, which, as long as man is man, cannot be separated from it. That these evils are unmixed, I do not say. More or less of good may often be found in connection with them. No institution, be it what it may, can make the life of a human being wholly evil, or cut off every means of improvement. God's benevolence triumphs over all the perverseness and folly of man's devices. He sends a cheering beam into the darkest abode. The slave has his hours of exhilaration. His hut occasionally rings with thoughtless mirth. Among this class, too, there are and must be, occasionally, higher pleasures. God is no respecter of persons; and in some slaves there is a happy nature which no condition can destroy, just as among children we find some whom the worst education cannot spoil. The African is so affectionate, imitative, and docile, that in favorable circumstances he catches much that is good; and accordingly the influence of a wise and kind master will be seen in the very countenance and bearing of his slaves. Among this degraded people, there are, occasionally, examples of superior intelligence and virtue, showing the groundlessness of the opinion that they are incapable of filling a higher rank than slavery, and showing that human nature is too generous and hardy to be wholly destroyed in the most unpropitious state. We also witness in this class, and very often, a superior physical development, a grace of form and motion, which almost extorts a feeling approaching respect. I mean not to affirm that slavery excludes all good, for human life cannot long endure under the privation of every thing happy and improving. I have spoken of its natural tendencies and results. These are wholly and only evil.

I am aware that it will be replied to the views now given of slavery, that persons living a distance from it cannot comprehend it, that its true character can be learned only from those who know it practically, and are familiar with its operations. To this I will not reply, that I have seen it near at hand. It is sufficient to reply, that men may lose the power of seeing an object fairly, by being too near as well as by being too remote. The slave-holder is too familiar with slavery

to understand it. To be educated in injustice is almost necessarily to be blinded by it more or less. To exercise usurped power from birth is the surest way to look upon it as a right and a good. The slave-holder tells us that he only can instruct us about slavery. But suppose that we wished to learn the true character of despotism ; should we go to the palace, and take the despot as our teacher ? Should we pay much heed to his assurance, that he alone could understand the character of absolute power, and that we in a republic could know nothing of the condition of men subjected to irresponsible will ? The sad influence of slavery, in darkening the mind which is perpetually conversant with it, is disclosed to us in the recent attempts made at the South to represent this institution as a good. Freemen, who would sooner die than resign their rights, talk of the happiness of those from whom every right is wrested. They talk of the slave as "property," with the same confidence as if this were the holiest claim. This is one of the mournful effects of slavery. It darkens the moral sense of the master. And can men, whose position is so unfavorable to just, impartial judgment, expect us to acquiesce in their views ?

There is another reply. If the slave-holding States expect us to admit their views of this institution, they must allow it to be freely discussed among themselves. Of what avail is their testimony in favor of slavery, when not a tongue is allowed to say a word in its condemnation ? Of what use is the press, when it can publish only on one side ? In large portions of the slave-holding States freedom of speech on this subject is at an end. Whoever should publish among them the sentiments respecting slavery, which are universally adopted through the civilized world, would put his life in jeopardy, would probably be flayed or hung. On this great subject, which affects vitally their peace and prosperity, their moral and political interests, no philanthropist, who has come to the truth, can speak his mind. Even the minister of religion, who feels the hostility between slavery and Christianity, dares not speak. His calling might not save him from popular rage. Thus slavery avenges itself. It brings the masters under despotism. It takes away that liberty which a freeman prizes as life, liberty of speech. All this, we are told, is necessary, and so it may be ; but an institution imposing such a necessity cannot be a good : and one thing is plain ; the testimony of men placed under such restraints cannot be too cautiously received. We have better sources of knowledge.

We have the testimony of ages, and the testimony of the unchangeable principles of human nature. These assure us that slavery is "evil, and evil continually."

I ought not to close this head without acknowledging (what I cheerfully do) that in many cases the kindness of masters does much for the mitigation of slavery. Could it be rendered harmless, the efforts of many would not be spared to make it so. It is evil, not through any singular corruption in the slaveholder, but from its own nature, and in spite of all efforts to make it a good. It is evil, not because it exists on this or that spot. Were it planted at the North, it might become a greater curse, more hardening and depraving, than it now proves under a milder sky. It is not of the particular form of slavery in this country that I complain. I am willing to allow that it is here comparatively mild ; that on many plantations no abuses exist, but such as are inseparable from its very nature. The mischief lies in its very nature. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." An institution so founded in wrong, so imbued with injustice, cannot be made a good. It cannot, like other institutions, be perpetuated by being improved. To improve it is to prepare the way for its subversion. Every melioration of the slave's lot is a step toward freedom. Slavery is thus radically, essentially evil. Every good man should earnestly pray and use every virtuous influence, that an institution so blighting to human nature may be brought to an end.